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University of New Hampshire

NEASC Self-Study Report

Committee on Institutional Effectiveness

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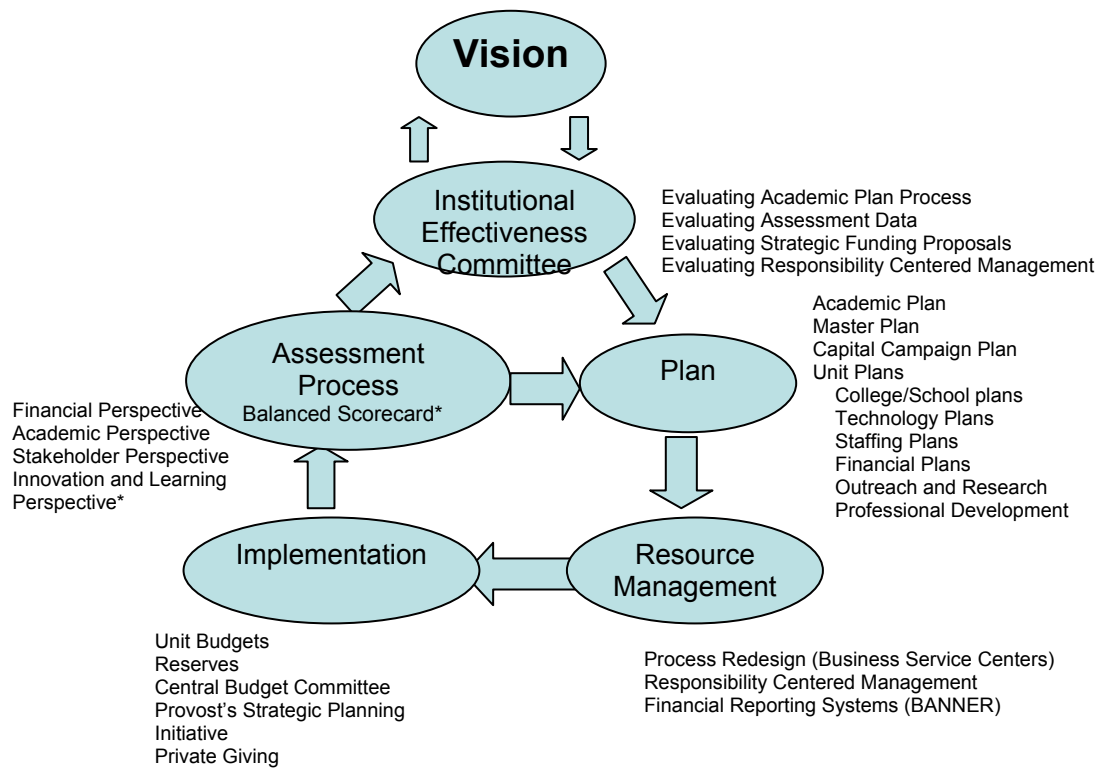
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Introduction

The University of New Hampshire's [Academic Plan](#) contains both strategic themes and related strategic goals and actions that will serve as the basis for annual and multi-year planning and decision-making. In order, however, for the University to achieve the mission articulated in the plan, each of our twenty-one "Responsibility Centers" must develop an integrated and effective system of planning, resource allocation, and assessment. The Responsibility Centers (or RC Units) include six academic schools and colleges and fifteen other units in areas of student affairs, service, administration, and research. (a complete list of RC units is available at: <http://www.unh.edu/rcm/>). The task of this "Institutional Effectiveness" committee is to evaluate the degree to which units have developed an academic or strategic plan that is consistent with the University's Academic Plan, the procedures that are being used to allocate resources to achieve the goals of the unit plan, and the assessment measures that are in place to maintain quality. While it is important that these processes take place, it is imperative that they be integrated. Also, they must be part of an overall process with a clear feedback mechanism that ensures that the information gained is used to improve not only the unit but also the institution as a whole. This entire process is designed to make sure the institution is meeting its threefold mission of scholarly teaching, research and public service and is continuing to achieve its vision for the future.

Process Map

The IE Committee developed a representative process map that illustrates how the University is able to "close the loop" between planning, resource allocation, implementation and assessment. Details on the specific elements of the process map are described in subsequent sections of this report. The first section describes the main elements of the system. This is followed by a description and appraisal of how well the elements have been integrated within a few RC units that represent the university's core academic mission.



* The "balanced scorecard" is borrowed from Robert S. Kaplan, David P. Norton, *The balanced scorecard : translating strategy into action*. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School Press, 1996

Institutional Effectiveness Efforts: Past and Present

Through the early to mid 1990s, the planning process at the University of New Hampshire was driven for the most part by cost cutting measures and budget rescissions. The planning efforts were centralized initiatives that included panels of faculty, staff, and administrators who determined where cost savings could be made but also identified areas in which the institution should invest to produce long-term benefits. This process resulted in the elimination of some programs and general budget tightening. Because cuts were politicized and difficult to implement, there were often across-the-board reductions in order to balance budgets. These reductions were often made without regard to the centrality or success of a program or department.

In the last decade, UNH has carefully built, and relied upon, a strong and coherent infrastructure for resource management. Most recently, the University has implemented a number of initiatives that better integrate the planning and budgeting process in a broader context that has been heretofore not possible. As a result, the University has become a more effective institution due to the following initiatives:

Academic Planning Process

University Academic Plan. In January of 2000, the President and the Provost convened a University Academic Planning Steering Committee. The Committee, made up of faculty,

students, administrators, and trustees was charged with establishing a five-year academic plan for the University. The Academic Plan establishes a shared vision that will serve as the foundation upon which the University and unit goals are developed. Unit plans must be based on the purpose and intended outcomes of the mission statement. To accomplish this goal, the university must integrate unit planning with institutional planning. In this context, units are expected to prepare updated annual plans that inform budget decisions. Unit plans must be consistent with the Academic Plan and grounded in the reality of what is possible with respect to the Master Plan and the Capital Campaign Plan. Academic, Research and Public Service, and Student Life units develop three to five-year plans that address program, staffing, technology and related areas. Administrative units such as Facilities, Computer Information Systems, and Human Resources develop unit plans with an institutional scope.

Schools and Colleges. The Provost's staff and a representative from the Vice President for Finance and Administration Office meet annually with each dean to discuss short- and long-term planning. The objective is to understand the strategic direction of the school/college, and in this context, budgeting decisions are discussed.

Master Plan. As the Academic Plan nears completion, the University is beginning to update its Comprehensive Campus Master Plan to meet the goals of the Academic Plan (<http://facilities.sr.unh.edu/plan.html>).

Capital Campaign Plan. The University has just completed a Capital Campaign that was based on academic priorities established by the Council of Deans. It was highly successful in communicating academic priorities to donors and meeting its financial goals. Planning for the next campaign is in its early stages and will be guided by the Academic Plan and Master Plan.

Resource Management

The Administrative Services Redesign Project (1995-1998) addressed a projected structural deficit in the University's budget (http://www.finadmin.unh.edu/asr/asr_main.html). The goals of the project were to reduce administrative costs by \$1.5 million; maintain/improve essential administrative services; avoid layoffs of administrative staff. Goals were all achieved by making significant changes in organization, process, and policy. As a result of this initiative, Business Service Centers were established. The Business Service Centers have qualified staff devoted to business functions. Each Business Service Center is headed by a Director who reports directly to the chief executive officer (e.g., a college dean). Some of the major outcomes of the project included: improved business services to divisions and departments, improved information for decision-making, and improved financial management. The implementation of the Business Service Centers positioned UNH to move to a new financial management system and planning process.

Responsibility Centered Management (RCM). The vision was to develop a new model that involves decentralized budget authority, places accountability within units, and brings greater clarity to financial decision-making. Following an extensive period of

evaluation, modeling, and communication, UNH “went live” with RCM on July 1, 2000. Background and details on RCM are located at <http://www.unh.edu/rcm/>.

Central Budget Committee. The current Central Budget Committee is advisory to the President and includes membership from all areas of the university. This committee provides oversight on budget issues, reviews and approves unit strategic plans, and recommends funding priorities. The AY 2002 report of the CBC is available at: <http://unhinfo.unh.edu/vpfa/02cbcreport.htm>

Assessment Activities

Academic Program Review. The Office of Academic Affairs and the Graduate School oversee periodic reviews of all undergraduate and graduate academic programs (<http://www.unh.edu/ir/pr1.html>). These reviews involve a self-study undertaken by representatives of the programs, review by an external review team, assessments by the appropriate deans, and overall oversight by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The program review guidelines (<http://www.unh.edu/ir/pr1.html>) describe the types of data that are to be considered during the self-study process and the processes by which judgments are made about programs. Program reviews result in recommendations to the Provost that either 1) the academic program be continued in its current form, 2) specific changes be made and a timeline developed for those changes to occur, or 3) the program be considered for elimination.

Student Outcomes Assessment. The University has become increasingly involved in the assessment of student learning. Information about this initiative, which is overseen by the Office of Academic Affairs, may be found at <http://www.unh.edu/academic-affairs/assessment/index.htm>. The members of the assessment team are faculty from each of the six schools and colleges, a faculty fellow, a representative of the university libraries, a representative of the University Writing Committee, the vice provost for undergraduate studies, and a research associate from the Student Affairs Research and Assessment Center. Additional information is discussed in Standard 2 and Standard 4 of the *11 Standards Self-Study Report*.

Delaware Cost and Faculty Productivity Study. UNH participates in this study and provides results to deans and to the departments undergoing academic program reviews (<http://www.udel.edu/IR/cost/>).

Student Affairs Research and Assessment Center. The Division of Student Affairs operates this center. Center staff members address a variety of continuing and ad hoc issues that are of importance to welfare of students. (<http://www.unh.edu/student-life/assessment/projects.htm>).

The preceding narrative represents major initiatives; it is not inclusive of all institutional activities that have taken place in recent years.

The Integration of Planning, Resource Allocation, and Assessment: A Case Study Approach

The effectiveness of an institution as a whole can only be determined by how well planning, resource allocation and assessment are being utilized and integrated by the various academic and administrative departments. We refer to this as “closing the loop.” Rather than provide a cursory view of all of the university’s schools and colleges and its administrative departments, four RC units were selected to serve as case studies. The units were not selected to present our best practices, but rather to represent the breadth of the institution’s core academic missions and practices associated with teaching, scholarship, and service. We emphasize that the academic units in the university—and, indeed, all of the units across the university—vary in the degree to which they have been successfully “closing the loop.”

Units Selected for Case Studies

The committee selected three of the University’s seven schools and colleges for case analysis. These following units are broadly representative of UNH’s academic life:

The College of Liberal Arts (COLA) is the largest college in the University, offers much of the general education instruction and a variety of majors at the baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral levels.

The School of Health and Human Services (HHS) is a professional school that offers undergraduate and graduate preparation in a number of health-related disciplines. The curricula are highly prescribed and follow strict accreditation guidelines.

The College of Engineering and Physical Sciences (CEPS) is a research-intensive unit with teaching loads that reflect research expectations, success in securing external funding, and a relatively large number of doctoral programs.

In addition, the committee reviewed the operations of several governance and infrastructure RC units. These are referenced collectively as:

Central Administration—Units include offices of the President, Provost, the various Vice Presidents, Facilities Services, and Computing and Information Services.

The IE Committee broke into case study subcommittees as follows:

- COLA: Gay Nardone, David Butler, Gavin Henning
- HHS: Jim McCarthy, Karol LaCroix, Dan Reid, Pam Dinapoli
- CEPS: Taylor Eighmy, Tom Ballester, Pete Pekins
- ADMIN: John Griffith, Leigh Anne Melanson, Victor Benassi

The case studies focused on how the four units have used planning to determine the allocation of resources. Each case study also speaks to how the unit has assessed progress in meeting its objectives and used the results of assessments to effect needed changes. Information was obtained from interviews of faculty, staff, and administrators in each unit. The interview questions are provided in the [Appendix](#).

Specific objectives were to:

- Evaluate the strategic planning process.
- Determine if resource allocation is a function of thoughtful and inclusive planning.
- Describe how units have implemented the goals and objectives of their strategic plans.
- Describe the assessment processes that are in place and how the data that is generated is being used to strengthen academic and administrative units.
- Lay the groundwork and criteria for the 5th year review of the university's financial management system (RCM).
- Make recommendations and projections for the future.

Subcommittees conducted the interviews from October to December of 2002. An interview guide was mailed to Deans, Directors, Chairs, Senior Central Administrators, and other individuals within the selected units. Committee members used information obtained from interviews, written responses to the interview guide, and related documents to construct the case studies. The individual case studies are available by clicking below:

[Case Report – Central Administration](#)

[Case Report – CEPS](#)

[Case Report – COLA](#)

[Case Report – HHS](#)

The entire IE committee reviewed the case studies in February 2003 and developed a draft of the appraisal and projections that follow. This draft was posted on the NEASC Self-Study web site (<http://www.unh.edu/neasc/index.htm>) in March 2003. The Steering Committee alerted the university community to the draft and to a set of open forums scheduled in April. This draft reflects revisions based on feedback at the forums, at several meetings with the Faculty Senate, and via direct correspondence. For more information on the overall disclosure process, see the Preface to this self-study.

APPRAISAL

The following represents a summary of findings on the integration of planning, resource allocation and assessment procedures within the four RC units.

Planning

The university's academic plan provides the framework for academic and administrative unit plans and budgets. In the School of Health and Human Services, the Dean and members of the School Executive Committee worked to develop a school-wide academic plan. The School embraced planning as an opportunity to reposition itself during a time of lower student enrollments and limited budgets. The School's plan now serves as the basis for individual department plans. In the College of Liberal Arts (http://www.unh.edu/liberal-arts/faculty/COLA_strategic_plan.pdf), the college plan is shaping department plans and budgets. In the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, the departments have provided plans to the Dean that are influencing the development of the college plan.

The university academic plan should drive the master plan, unit plans, technology, professional staffing plans, and the next capital campaign. The interviews conducted by the central administration units subcommittee revealed that considerable work remains to be done in these areas. Because the academic plan is new, many individual unit plans have not been specifically linked with the academic plan. For example, the Student Affairs plan, developed about the same time as the university academic plan, remains to be specifically linked to the university plan. All vice presidents understand the expectation and need to integrate unit plans with the university plan, and this will be a focus over the months ahead.

Resource Management

- RCM is making budgeting and resource management decisions more transparent in the RC units studied. The leaders of RC units were able to link, for the first time, “cause and effect” relationships with planned programs, course related decisions, curricula and unit goals and objectives. RCM has not eliminated uncertainty, but this financial management system has reduced it to acceptable levels.
- RCM removes the guesswork from routine and, in some cases, strategic decisions, especially in the areas of hiring, staffing, curriculum development, course and program management.
- Business Service Centers in each of the RCs studied were generally well-received by those who use the centers and have been seen as improving services.
- The Provost requires school and college hiring plans to be part of the units’ planning process.
- The interviews conducted by the central administration units subcommittee revealed a number of issues that raise concerns about the mission and charge of the Central Budget Committee. Among the concerns raised were:
 - Central Budget Committee is supposed to be strategic but not fulfilling its goal in large part because funding is limited and the committee’s charge is ambiguous.
 - RCM creates natural reallocation; the Central Budget Committee needs to make strategic allocations.
- A new web based management reporting system – MR2 -- has greatly enhanced the generation of timely and customized financial reports.
<http://www.fresh.unh.edu/mr2/index.html>

Implementation

- Implementation plans and/or programs are not established activities within two of the three academic units studied. The School of Health and Human Services has a written implementation plan. The College of Engineering and Physical Sciences and the College of Liberal Arts are in the process of writing one. Most central administrative units already have or are in the process of developing plans that are linked to the strategies and action items included in the university academic plan (e.g., see Cooperative Extension at <http://ceinfo.unh.edu/common/documents/stplan02.pdf>).
- It appears that an increasing number of department chairs and faculty in the three academic units studied are aware of, if not actively involved with, some aspect of the implementation of the university's academic plan.
- Upon the implementation of Responsibility Center Management, President Leitzel mandated that this initiative would receive a comprehensive review after five years. In fact, there has been ongoing review and assessment of RCM from the outset and, under the direction of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, the university will be prepared to undertake the 5th year review.

Assessment

- Academic Affairs, in conjunction with all of the schools and colleges, the University Library, and the Student Affairs Research and Assessment Center, has made significant progress over the past five years in developing and implementing a student outcomes assessment program. At the same time, within individual academic units, the deans and chairs recognize that new approaches to assessment are needed.
- External assessment/evaluation of academic programs is done in the context of regular academic program reviews and reviews by professional accreditation associations and agencies.
- Assessment is most firmly established in the academic areas. The student outcomes assessment project and the academic program review cycle are institutionalized. There has been a process in place for several decades that provides for the regular evaluations of all academic courses taught at the university. Results of these evaluations, in combination with other information, are used for retention, promotion, and tenure decisions and for post tenure reviews. The Office of Institutional Research tracks performance indicators that provide assessment information related to many areas of the university (e.g., extramural grants and contracts, institutional rankings, alumni contributions, instructional technology, and financial indicators).

Closing the Loop

- There is evidence, especially in the academic areas examined for this report, that resource allocation is linked to planning.
- A growing number of assessment activities are taking place throughout the institution and the information gathered is being used as a basis for making improvements within the unit. Once again, most of the progress in this regard has been made in the academic areas.
- The University's Academic Plan serves as the focal point for the strategic plans that are being developed within each of the units, although progress in meeting this goal varies among the RC Units.

PROJECTIONS

Development of a Master Schedule for Review of Implementation of Academic Plan

By December 1, 2003, the vice presidents and the president should have developed a master schedule that indicates the following for each action item in their area plan:

- The responsible person for ensuring implementation of the action item
- Steps involved in implementing the action item
- The target date for implementation of the action item
- The outcomes/measures used to assess whether the action item has been successfully implemented

The Office of Academic Affairs has already developed a master schedule for relevant action items. This schedule may be used as a template for other units.

Further Development of Strategic Plans

Now that the university academic plan is in place, **further work must be done in all academic and administrative units** of the university to prepare and implement unit level strategic plans that are clearly linked to the university plan. Some units are clearly further along in this process and, conversely, in some units there is considerable work that is yet to be done. To accomplish this goal, the vice presidents should ensure that by June 30, 2004, for each unit in their area, there is substantial progress in the development of a strategic plan.

Institutional Effectiveness

The President should create a standing Institutional Effectiveness Committee in order to provide prominence and sustainability to activities that assure the continued integration and success of strategic planning, resource allocation, implementation, and assessment.

If the Institutional Effectiveness Committee is created, the Central Budget Committee should be disbanded. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee should assume the

responsibility of overseeing the ongoing process of assessment undertaken at the vice-presidential and presidential levels and make recommendations to the President regarding the allocation of strategic initiative funds to the RC units.

Institution and Unit Level Review and Assessment

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee should review, evaluate, and recommend modifications to planning and assessment activities that occur at all levels and in all areas of the university as a mean of ensuring quality. This focus on ensuring that all units are engaged in ongoing systematic assessment will be a primary means of enhancing institutional effectiveness.

Members of the university's Student Outcomes Assessment Committee should continue to work with colleagues in their units to introduce measures that will effectively assess student educational outcomes and that will be used to improve educational practice.

At the end of each academic year, the deans should include in their annual report to the Provost the degree of progress made in developing and implementing assessment tools within their unit. Similar approaches should be developed and implemented for all other areas of the university as well.

The current efforts to periodically review undergraduate and graduate academic programs should be continued and strengthened. As work in the area of student learning outcomes assessment progresses, there should be increased attention given to student learning in all self-study documents. The results of assessment should be used systematically to identify strengths and weaknesses of programs and to make changes intended to improve student learning. In addition, for those programs reviewed by a specialized accreditation agency, there is a need to better align those reviews with the academic program review process. The policies and guidelines for graduate and undergraduate program reviews provide guidance on how this alignment might occur (<http://www.unh.edu/ir/pr1.html>).

In the same way that formal academic program reviews of all academic programs are conducted on a regular basis, a periodic evaluation of all other administrative units should be done. The self-studies for these reviews should be undertaken by the units undergoing the review. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee should coordinate and oversee the process. Policies, guidelines, and timetables will need to be developed (<http://www.unh.edu/ir/pr1.html>).

All academic and administrative units in the university should identify benchmarks against which progress can be measured in achieving future goals. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee should periodically review these benchmarks to ensure that they relate directly to the university academic plan and to individual unit strategic plans. Assessment of performance relative to these benchmarks should be a central component of all formal academic program and administrative unit reviews.

As the group responsible for oversight of the components of institutional effectiveness, the newly established Institutional Effectiveness Committee should, by the end of its first

year of operation, establish clear guidelines for processes to be followed by each unit as it assesses its effectiveness. One model for this task is the “Balanced Scorecard” approach which has been used in both academic and non-academic settings (see Robert S. Kaplan, David P. Norton, *The balanced scorecard : translating strategy into action*. Boston, Mass. : Harvard Business School Press, 1996).

Stakeholder Assessments

During the interviews with representatives of the three academic units and of the central administrative units, there was some indication of periodic or sporadic assessment of stakeholders important to those units. For example, the university routinely sends graduates a Recent Alumni Survey (<http://www.unh.edu/ir/alumni11.html>). Similarly, academic units undergoing program or accreditation reviews sample opinion of current and former students.

Assessments from key stakeholders are critically important if we are to identify strengths and weaknesses of our programs and services in advancing our collective mission. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee should work with the vice presidents to improve current efforts within their areas designed to assess stakeholders and to use the obtained information to make any needed changes in programs and service.

Roles and Responsibilities of Academic Department Chairs

The roles and responsibilities of academic department chairs have increased in number and complexity over the past decade. We recommend that recent efforts to provide professional development opportunities for academic department chairs be increased and made more routine. The Provost’s Office and a group of department chairs who advise the Provost will be responsible for moving this initiative forward.

Improved Communication

The university should develop a strategic communication plan for institutional effectiveness through the Office of the Vice President of Communications.

5th Year Review of Responsibility Center Management

After the completion of the 5th year of Responsibility Centered Management (RCM), in FY 06, the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs will chair a committee to assess the effectiveness of RCM as the University’s financial management system. The committee will prepare a report for the President that provides a description and analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of RCM and offers recommendations concerning any needed changes or improvements.

The review should have two major components:

- The committee will collect, analyze and evaluate data on a variety of measures. Data sources will include, but should not be limited to, student outcome learning measures, class sizes, grade distributions, interdisciplinary teaching and research activities, faculty productivity measures, RC unit fund balance levels, faculty/student ratios, the number of new faculty hires, and recommendations from internal and external program reviews. The committee will determine if there are any significant

differences before and after the implementation of RCM using these and other indicators of academic quality.

- The committee will administer instruments such as interviews and surveys across the university to assess the understanding of RCM and the perceptions that exist regarding how RCM is working. The interviews should include Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, President's Staff, Faculty Senate, Research Directors, Academic and Student Support Units, RC Unit Directors and other appropriate individuals and groups.

Conclusion

Within the past five years, the University of New Hampshire has made significant progress in “closing the loop”. There is ample evidence at the institutional level that planning, resource allocation, and assessment are on-going procedures that are fully integrated. Information that is generated from these processes is being used to make substantive changes.

It is also clear that more work needs to be done. Within the individual units, there are cases where further progress needs to be made in developing and implementing academic plans and integrating them with the University's academic plan. While Responsibility Centered Management appears to be successful, the “fifth-year review” will be an important undertaking. The results of this evaluation will help to determine the best financial management system for the future. Assessment procedures must continue in the academic areas but should be more fully implemented in the administrative units. With the creation of an Institutional Effectiveness Committee, the connections between planning, resource allocation and assessments will become more prominent. As a result, more constituents will better understand and appreciate their role and their value in fulfilling the University's mission and achieving its vision of “Combining the living and learning environment of a small New England liberal arts college with the breadth, spirit of discovery, and civic commitment of a land-grant research institution.”